

**County of Middlesex  
Office of Workforce Development  
One Stop Operations/WorkFirst Collaborative Meeting  
550 Jersey Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 - WIA Conference Room B  
March 27, 2014 – 1:30 PM**

Attendees: Jane Brady, Baden Almonor, Manuel Biagas, Christie Branaldi, George Brokaw, Shaaron Crossland, Janice Fishbein, Carla Ghee, Sherri Goldberg, Sharon Hartman, Wanda Johnson, Adrienne Keaton, Dawn Lystad, Bobbin Paskell, Regina Riccioni, Miriam Ruiz, John Ross, Roni Salkin, Jeff Shulman, Michele Suskind, Timothy Timberlake, Linda Urbach, Fortune Valenty, Henrietta Wilson, Tina Rose Yuli, Jean Zwingli

Staff: Helina K. Wisniewski, Secretary

Adrienne Keaton called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm.

**Review and Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the December 5, 2013 One Stop Operations Committee were presented for approval. John Ross made a motion for the approval of the minutes of the December 5, 2013 meeting. Janice Fishbein seconded and the motion carried.

**UI Issues – Carla Ghee**

The past three weeks were very slow. Prior to that, the office was very busy with a high volume of traffic. Starting late January thru March customers were inquiring about the 1099G tax form needed to prepare their tax returns. In the past, the 1099G form was mailed out, but this year NJDLWD decided to make it available on line, which resulted in chaos. Many people were having issues retrieving the tax form from the website. The New Brunswick UI office is seeing about 100 people a day as opposed to the several hundred people a day few weeks ago.

The unemployment extended benefits are still suspended and there is no definite return date, if they return at all. If the extended benefits become reactivated, they will be retroactive to the week of December 28, 2013 when they ended. People are still coming in inquiring about the benefits.

Staffing is very minimal. There are four staff members including Carla in the New Brunswick UI office. After July, 2013 one staff member was transferred to another office and one is working part time 21 hours, leaving three people to tend to the front area. They are desperately in need of a bilingual worker.

**GED Update – Jane Brady**

The new McGraw Hill High School Equivalency test (HSE), which takes the place of the GED test, is now being administered by Perth Amboy Board of Education and New Brunswick Board of Education.

**Fortune Valenty – Perth Amboy Adult School**

Mrs. Valenty indicated she participated in a webinar for two hours trying to understand the procedures for HSE, which was very complicated. She will be attending another webinar the week of March 31.

After five attempts, there were problems registering sixty people. On March 19, 2014, 28 people showed for the HSE test. The cost is \$92.00 per person with two free tests from McGraw Hill. The HSE testing will be available every month, two days a week at the Perth Amboy Adult School.

### **Tim Timberlake – New Brunswick Adult School**

Mr. Timberlake indicated Youth Corp will not be charged the extra \$40.00 for their students to take the HSE test until the next fiscal year, due to the fact that the increased cost wasn't built into their budget. First time testers must bring a \$92.00 money order if they live outside New Brunswick and \$52.00 money order if they live in New Brunswick. Non-resident re-testers must bring a \$10.00 money order for each subject area the first two times that they re-test and \$20.00 for each subject area re-tests after the initial two re-tests. Resident re-testers can take two re-tests at no additional cost. Each subject area re-tests after the initial two re-tests will cost \$10.40. Registration hours are Monday and Tuesday from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm and 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm. Registration can take up to 30 minutes depending upon the number of registrants that come in at any given time. Individuals must bring three (3) forms of identification.

Individuals will not have immediate access to their scores. The testing center will provide the scores to them once the database is developed. All the tests are provided by McGraw Hill.

### **Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) – Jane Brady**

The New Jersey Training Opportunities website contains information on approved schools and training providers. These programs are placed on the State Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Any program funded by WIA must be on the Eligible Training Provider List.

As of March, 2014 the State Legislation is enforcing the law that schools on the ETPL must have their placement information posted on the Consumer Report Card by April 18, 2014 or they will be removed from the ETPL. The placement information must include all students, not just WIA participants. However, if a school is removed after April 18<sup>th</sup> and they have students attending their programs, the students will be allowed to stay and finish out the programs. In the past, the majority of the schools never placed their placement information on the Consumer Report Card.

The State established an ETPL Committee two or three years ago but never met. It was established again to discuss the Consumer Report Card and other issues.

### **Youth Programs Update – Jane Brady**

There was an Alternative High School Diploma graduation celebration on January 2, 2014 at Middlesex County College which was absolutely wonderful.

The month of April the youth will be touring Wegman's located in Woodbridge. In May 2014, the youth will be touring Rutgers University in the maintenance department and will eat in the cafeteria at Livingston Campus with college students.

The Middlesex County Workforce Action Group (MCWAG) program has five students starting employment. Of these five students, two will be going to the Raritan Bay Medical Center, two are going to a transportation company for logistics, and the fifth one will be working at a doctor's office.

The Youth RFP is currently available and must be returned by April 17, 2014. There were four agencies present at the Technical Assistance meeting, who may possibly submit proposals for next program year. A writing skills component was added as a requirement for youth programs that will be funded for next program year.

There will be an ad on the MCAT shuttle soon for a month or so, that hopefully will bring more youth into the youth program. Meetings were held with the Juvenile Justice Conference Committee, Probation Officers, Public Defenders, Court Juvenile Officers and the United Way to make their staff aware of our youth programs.

### **WorkFirst Update – John Ross**

**Needs Based Fund** - Needs Based Fund grant was received in the amount of \$50,000 from the DOL to be added to the transportation funds specifically earmarked for TANF individuals who are employed. Previously, transportation funds were paid from the Block Grant which is nearly exhausted. As of last month, \$39,000 was spent for transportation. The MCATS shuttle will continue to allow TANF individuals to ride for free who are going back and forth from activities and employment.

**Monitoring** – There are three monitoring steps that are conducted annually for the TANF program. The vendors that will be assessed are New Brunswick Adult Learning Center and Middlesex County College for benchmarks, financial, placements, check on individuals if they are treated properly and the contents of the program. We make certain recommendations if necessary, in terms of changes. The process is very long and takes about a week to complete. New Brunswick ALC is completed and MCC will be monitored next week.

The second step is the Work Verification Monitoring which is a combination of DOL and Division of Family Development resources. They specifically check on certain individuals with the vendors and check if the time is correctly reported through the e-time system. Monitoring was done on selected individuals in the month of November and the report was very satisfying.

The third step is new. Sharon Hartman indicated it's very complimentary. The TANF Verification Plan is completed by DOL and Division of Family Development. There are basic questions for the vendors including attendance. Active clients will be monitored from the months of May and December for their activities.

The RFP was given to the existing vendors New Brunswick Adult Learning Center and Middlesex County College. The RFP has an extra category called Job Readiness for those individuals who complete Job Search but there is no CWEP site available and they will be placed into a different category. The RFP for GA clients did have changes and the numbers are much higher than two years ago. There were six categories and now it has three categories.

### **OJT**

George Brokaw, Employment & Training Specialist for Workforce Grant and Program Management and the new OJT Representative in Middlesex County. He will be working with WorkFirst OJT that will provide pre-screened applicants for job openings. It will offer support from local OJT representatives and WorkFirst Case Managers who work with the OJT participant to insure their success in their new employment opportunity. The program not only helps people learn skills and establish themselves in new fields, it gives employers an incentive to hire new workers and invest in their skill development. WorkFirst OJT provides pre-screened applicants for job opening. Mr. Brokaw can be reached at (908)965-3956 or his email at george.brokaw@dol.state.nj.us.

### **Open Discussion/Other Business**

- Michelle Suskind – a Camp Fair is scheduled for Saturday, April 12, 2014 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Conference Center at Raritan Valley Community College. Michelle handed out a flyer describing the Fair.
- Sherri Goldberg – the John A. Delaney low-income public housing projects in Perth Amboy are in the process of being demolished.
- Jane Brady – indicated she is retiring as of May 2, 2014.
- Jane Brady - a WIB Job Fair is scheduled for Wednesday, May 28, 2014 from 10am – 1pm at Middlesex County College, Crabel Hall.
- Jane Brady –Garret Gega WIA Job Developer introduced six job tip spots that will run for 30 seconds each on the radio station WCTC. Tips include information on resumes, interviewing skills and using social media for job search. Hopefully, listeners will find the information helpful.

- Jane Brady – there was a Job Fair in Carteret on March 26, 2014. There were 37 companies present and 318 job seekers.
- Bobbin Paskell - On January 30, 2013, Middlesex County conducted its annual Point in Time (PIT) survey of homeless individuals and families residing in Middlesex County. The main reason for being homeless is due to economy or the lack of income to match up with the cost of living. The largest population in Middlesex County was present in shelters, transitional housing or on the streets. In 2013 there were 414 individual single men and 205 female single parents homeless with a family size ranges from 2 to 8 struggling to make ends meet and can't afford the cost of living. Many of these single men are employable and some may not be for various reasons. Coming Home of Middlesex County, Inc. started their own Homeless Management Information System internally in November 2012. They left the statewide system in 2012.

A new program was developed called Coming Home Campaign on March 25, 2014. They will be working with developers and institutions identifying properties to build affordable units of different types.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 26, 2014, 2014 at 1:30pm at the One Stop Career Center, 550 Jersey Avenue, WIA Conference Room B. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.

#### **Information/Handout Distributed to Members**

- Michelle Suskind –Camp Fair Flyer
- Jane Brady –Job Fair Flyer
- George Brokaw – Information on OJT